

CLAIMS

I claim:

1. A method for treating a depressed skin defect, comprising:

- (a) applying a vacuum pressure to the depressed skin defect;
- (b) regulating the vacuum pressure within a prescribed range of pressures; and
- (c) releasing the vacuum pressure after a time interval.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising repeating (a)-(c) one or more times.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at or above 10 inches Hg and at or below 80 inches Hg.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at a constant pressure level.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the depressed skin defect is a scar.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the depressed skin defect is a wrinkle.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising injecting a bioactive material into the depressed skin defect.

8. The method of claim 1 further comprising performing subcision on the depressed skin defect.

9. The method of claim 1 further comprising performing laser therapy on the depressed skin defect.

10. The method of claim 1 further comprising performing chemical peeling, dermabrasion, or other skin resurfacing treatments on the depressed skin defect.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at a pressure sufficient to elevate the depressed skin defect, but less than a pressure that causes damage to tissue surrounding the depressed skin defect.

12. An apparatus for treating a depressed area of skin tissue comprising:
a vacuum source to generate a vacuum pressure;
an applicator having a first end coupled to the vacuum source and a second end configured with an opening, the depressed area of skin tissue being subjected to the vacuum pressure upon placement of the opening on the depressed area of skin tissue.

13. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the opening comprises an applicator tip configured to surround the depressed area of skin tissue.
14. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the vacuum pressure is generated by a vacuum pump.
15. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated within prescribed range of pressures.
16. The apparatus of claim 15 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at or above 10 inches Hg and at or below 80 inches Hg.
17. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the vacuum pressure is released after a time interval.
18. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the applicator may be removeably attached to the vacuum source.
19. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the applicator is attached to the vacuum source by an air-tight seal at a prescribed range of vacuum pressure.
20. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the opening of the applicator is designed to match the shape and size of the depressed area of skin tissue to be treated.

21. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the depressed area of skin tissue to be treated is a scar.

22. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the depressed area of skin tissue to be treated is a wrinkle.

23. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the apparatus is used as an adjunct to injection of bioactive material into the depressed area of skin tissue.

24. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the apparatus is used as an adjunct to subcision on the depressed area of skin tissue.

25. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the apparatus is used as an adjunct to laser therapy on the depressed area of skin tissue.

26. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the apparatus is used as an adjunct to chemical peeling, dermabrasion, or other skin resurfacing treatments.

27. A method for treating a depressed skin defect, comprising:

- applying a vacuum pressure to the depressed skin defect;
- regulating the vacuum pressure within a prescribed range of pressures;
- releasing the vacuum pressure after a time interval; and
- injecting a bioactive material into the depressed skin defect.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein the bioactive material is liquid silicone.

29. The method of claim 27 wherein the bioactive material is collagen.

30. The method of claim 27 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at or above 10 inches Hg and at or below 80 inches Hg.

31. The method of claim 27 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at a constant pressure level.

32. The method of claim 27 wherein the depressed skin defect is a scar.

33. The method of claim 27 wherein the depressed skin defect is a wrinkle.

34. The method of claim 27 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at a pressure sufficient to elevate the skin defect, but less than a pressure that causes damage to tissue surrounding the skin defect.

35. A method for treating a depressed skin defect, comprising:
applying a vacuum pressure to the depressed skin defect;
regulating the vacuum pressure within a prescribed range of pressures;

releasing the vacuum pressure after a time interval; and
performing subcision on the depressed skin defect.

36. The method of claim 35 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at or above 10 inches Hg and at or below 80 inches Hg.

37. The method of claim 35 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at a constant pressure level.

38. The method of claim 35 wherein the depressed skin defect is a scar.

39. The method of claim 35 wherein the depressed skin defect is a wrinkle.

40. The method of claim 35 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at a pressure sufficient to elevate the skin defect, but less than a pressure that causes damage to tissue surrounding the skin defect.

41. A method for treating a depressed skin defect, comprising:

applying a vacuum pressure to the depressed skin defect;
regulating the vacuum pressure within a prescribed range of pressures;
releasing the vacuum pressure after a time interval; and
performing laser therapy on the depressed skin defect.

42. The method of claim 41 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at or above 10 inches Hg and at or below 80 inches Hg.

43. The method of claim 41 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at a constant pressure level.

44. The method of claim 41 wherein the depressed skin defect is a scar.

45. The method of claim 41 wherein the depressed skin defect is a wrinkle.

46. The method of claim 41 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at a pressure sufficient to elevate the skin defect, but less than a pressure that causes damage to tissue surrounding the skin defect.

47. A method for treating a depressed skin defect, comprising:

- applying a vacuum pressure to the depressed skin defect;
- regulating the vacuum pressure within a prescribed range of pressures;
- releasing the vacuum pressure after a time interval; and
- performing chemical peeling, dermabrasion, or other skin resurfacing treatments on the depressed skin defect.

48. The method of claim 47 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at or above 10 inches Hg and at or below 80 inches Hg.

49. The method of claim 47 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at a constant pressure level.

50. The method of claim 47 wherein the depressed skin defect is a scar.

51. The method of claim 47 wherein the depressed skin defect is a wrinkle.

52. The method of claim 47 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at a pressure sufficient to elevate the skin defect, but less than a pressure that causes damage to tissue surrounding the skin defect.

53. A method for treating a hypertrophic scar, comprising:

- (a) applying a vacuum pressure to the hypertrophic scar;
- (b) regulating the vacuum pressure within a prescribed range of pressures; and
- (c) releasing the vacuum pressure after a time interval.

54. The method of claim 53 further comprising repeating (a)-(c) one or more times.

55. The method of claim 53 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at or above 10 inches Hg and at or below 80 inches Hg.

56. The method of claim 53 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at a constant pressure level.

57. The method of claim 53 further comprising injecting a skin-weakening medicament into the hypertrophic scar.

58. The method of claim 57 wherein the skin-weakening medicament is cortisone.

59. The method of claim 53 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at a pressure sufficient to soften the hypertrophic scar, but less than a pressure that causes damage to tissue surrounding the hypertrophic scar.

60. An apparatus for treating a hypertrophic scar comprising:
a vacuum source to generate a vacuum pressure; and
an applicator having a first end coupled to the vacuum source and a second end configured with an opening, the hypertrophic scar being subjected to the vacuum pressure upon placement of the opening on the hypertrophic scar.

61. The apparatus of claim 60 wherein the opening comprises an applicator tip configured to surround the hypertrophic scar.

62. The apparatus of claim 60 wherein the vacuum pressure is generated by a vacuum pump.

63. The apparatus of claim 60 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated within a prescribed range of pressures.

64. The apparatus of claim 63 wherein the vacuum pressure is regulated at or above 10 inches Hg and at or below 80 inches Hg.

65. The apparatus of claim 60 wherein the vacuum pressure is released after a time interval.

66. The apparatus of claim 60 wherein the applicator may be removeably attached to the vacuum source.

67. The apparatus of claim 60 wherein the applicator is attached to the vacuum source by an air-tight seal at a prescribed range of vacuum pressure.

68. The apparatus of claim 60 wherein the opening of the applicator is designed to match the shape and size of the hypertrophic scar.

69. The apparatus of claim 60 wherein the apparatus is used as an adjunct to injection of a skin-weakening medicament into the hypertrophic scar.

70. The apparatus of claim 69 wherein the skin-weakening medicament is cortisone.